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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

EP 6 '78

Issue #72
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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL CONFERENCE.....Due to the recent reorganization of the Department, and the impending arrival of the new Assistant Secretary for Administration, the Conference scheduled for November has been changed to January 18-20, 1978. The location will still be the Sheraton-Fredericksburg Motor Inn, Fredericksburg, Virginia. (Contact: Jack Carson, APHIS, ext. 75213)

1977 COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN.....This year's Combined Federal Campaign was kicked off by the Secretary at a meeting in the Jefferson Auditorium on October 13. In his remarks, the Secretary said "This campaign means a great deal in the personal lives of millions of people who are touched by the services of the 162 voluntary agencies supported by the CFC. I am asking each of you to give serious consideration to the meaning of this campaign and to give your personal support to CFC this fall."

USDA's goal for this campaign, which is scheduled to run through the end of October, is \$453,453. The theme is "Giving to People."

Secretary Bergland will serve as Chairman for this year's drive. Ray Fitzgerald, ASCS, is Vice Chairman and Gail Sedgwick is Campaign Director. (Contact: Gail Sedgwick, ARS, ext. 73801).

QUESTIONABLE USES OF FIRST-CLASS AIR TRAVEL.....An analysis of NFC travel data by the Office of Audit disclosed questionable practices relating to use of first-class air accommodations during official travel. All first-class air accommodations must be specifically authorized on an individual trip basis as required by 7 AR 552. Officials approving travel vouchers are responsible for ensuring that an adequate justification for first-class travel is shown on each voucher. First-class air travel should generally be limited to situations where security factors require special accommodations, employee disability requires special accommodations, or first-class accommodations are determined to be the only class available after reasonable attempts to secure lower class accommodations. Agencies should make a special effort to ensure that all officials approving travel vouchers are aware of the limitations on and justification requirements for first-class air travel. (Contact: Frank Stidman, OF, ext. 72370)

EXPANDED CENTRALIZED COPIER AND DUPLICATING SYSTEM.....In the interest of overall economy, the Office of Operations is expanding central copier and duplicating services in the Metropolitan Washington area. Expanded service under the centralized system has been completed in the GHI Building, Cotton Annex, Auditors Building and Administration Building. In four duplicating stations, new Xerox 9200 duplicators have been installed to increase production and improve turnaround time. (Contact: Al Cauley, OO, ext. 72815)

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES CONFERENCE.....Representatives from the Office of Operations met with agency Administrative Services Directors on October 3-5, to identify critical problem areas and establish common priorities for FY 1978. Deputy Secretary White and Acting Assistant Secretary for Administration J. Fred King, met with the group to discuss Departmental priorities and program direction.

Priority areas of common concern include Washington headquarters space, real and personal property management, efficient central services operations, increasing administrative services professional competence, delegation of leasing authority, and implementation of internal USDA energy conservation measures. (Contact: George Knapp, 00, ext. 73937)

PRINTING PLANT PRODUCTION.....At the direction of the Joint Committee on Printing, the eight unit large Harris Press has been shut down. This will have an immediate adverse effect on production. Some work previously done in the plant will now be contracted out through COMM. (Contact: Nelson Fitton, COMM, ext. 76623)

REQUESTS FOR PRINTING AND COMPOSITION.....Effective October 1, all requests for printing that do not exceed 60,000 units and require delivery within 5 days must be submitted to the Printing Liaison Branch, COMM, on Form AD-78.

For the present, composition to be produced in 00 will continue to be ordered directly from the Photocomposition Branch, 00, on Form 00-60. (Contact: Printing Liaison Branch, COMM, ext. 75983)

GASOLINE CREDIT CARD MISUSE.....A preliminary study in GSA shows that about 5% of U.S. Government national credit card charges are fraudulent. Although some of these are the result of card theft, the vast majority are from employees using the cards to purchase gasoline and services for their privately-owned vehicles. Inattention or collusion on the part of station owners is a factor. GSA is investigating their own motor pool fleet and will distribute investigative procedures to other departments so that they may conduct similar studies for their own fleets. (Contact: Harold Franklin, 00, ext. 77557)

TEXT EDITING EQUIPMENT.....To increase the text editing capability of the Photocomposition Branch, a contract has been awarded to the Computer Products Unlimited Company for new equipment. The terminals and text editing equipment are expected to be installed within 150 days and the present phototypesetting equipment phased out in order to comply with the Joint Committee on Printing (JCP) requirements that the Government Printing Office (GPO) process all phototypesetting. (Contact: Tom Foster, 00, ext. 76867)

NEW COMPETITIVE RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAM.....The Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 has expanded the Department's role in providing competitive grants for basic research to further the programs of the Department.

To implement this Act, CSRS has established an Office of Competitive Grants to support the fundamental research in specific areas that show promise of generating new knowledge vital for applied research advances in food production and nutrition.

For the first time, research proposals will be accepted from any qualified scientist with the facilities and resources to carry out the proposed research. This greatly expands the scope of the research grants beyond the traditional limits of land-grant universities.

The FY 1978 budget includes \$15 million for this program;\$10 million for plant science research related to food production and \$5 million for human nutrition research. (Contact: Mason Miller, CSRS, ext. 73880)

MAIL TRAINING SEMINARS.....In line with the Mail Management Improvement Plan, the first two of a projected series of training classes were held on September 29-30 and October 3-4. This course covered general mail management information and forms the basis for more specialized courses which will follow during FY 1978. The two sessions, conducted by Pitney Bowes' Postal Education Instructors, were attended by more than 40 agency personnel. (Contact: Gerald Miske, 00, ext. 73152)

JOSEPH F. MALAGA TO HEAD STUDY OF FEDERAL ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES.....Administrator Solomon of GSA and Acting Director McIntyre, OMB, named Joseph F. Malaga to direct the Presidentially-mandated "Reorganization Study of Federal Administrative Services." Malaga will head the project staff in assessing the roles of GSA and other agencies in the provision of services related to real and personal property, transportation, data processing, telecommunications and records management. USDA has been asked to recommend participants to serve on project task forces. (Contact: George Knapp, 00, ext. 73937)

FY 1978 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS.....The House reported the first supplemental appropriations bill for FY 1978 on September 28. The bill contains the following items for USDA:

-Office of the Secretary - \$145,000 for increased pay costs related to the recently approved pay raise for executive level positions and the increase in the pay ceiling for higher level General Schedule grades. In addition, the limitation of \$1,500,000 on transfers is increased to \$2,164,000.

-Farmers Home Administration - \$4,000,000 to provide additional funds for weatherization grants for housing of very low income elderly rural homeowners.

-Soil Conservation Service - \$30,000,000 for watershed and flood prevention operations for emergency assistance to repair damage to watersheds as a result of major storms or forest fires which occurred in 1976.

Senate action is expected shortly. (Contact: Bob Barham, OBPE, ext. 76176)

NEW APPOINTMENT.....

...OIG - Thomas F. McBride, the Director of the Bureau of Enforcement, Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB), has been appointed Inspector General.

Before joining the CAB, Mr. McBride was associate special prosecutor with the Watergate special prosecution force and from 1970 to 1973 he was associate director and staff director of the Police Foundation, funded by the Ford Foundation to support innovation and experimentation in police and criminal justice. Mr. McBride also served as a Peace Corps officer in Latin America from 1965 to 1968.

Mr. McBride will take up his new assignment on October 25.

LEGISLATION.....

....Farm Bill - The President signed S. 275, the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977, on September 29. The measure is now Public Law 95-113.

...Farm Housing - The House agreed to the Conference Report on H. R. 6655, the Housing and Community Development Act of 1977, on October 4. The measure is now cleared for the President who has until October 18 to make his decision. Title V of the Act contains the rural housing program extensions. (Contact: Al Duran, OBPE, ext. 74654)

YOUNG ADULT CONSERVATION CORPS (YACC).....YACC is a \$233 million program jointly administered by USDA, Interior and Labor to provide 22,000 year-round jobs for unemployed and out-of-school youths, 16-23 years of age, in conservation work on national forests and other public lands.

The Forest Service federal portion of the program will provide jobs for approximately 7,830 youths in 42 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The program also includes a \$69 million state grant program, jointly administered by USDA and Interior, which will be conducted in all 50 states and provide jobs for approximately 6,600 youths. Preference in enrollment will be given to individuals who reside in areas with an unemployment rate of 6.5% or more. (Contact: Robert Johnson, FS, ext. 78801)

FOREST SERVICE INFORM AND INVOLVE TRAINING SESSIONS.....The Forest Service Office of Information has planned major in-service training sessions on public involvement procedures to be held in 10 cities nationwide, beginning November 1, in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Department of Interior personnel will attend, and invitations have been extended to state foresters. In addition, a cross-section of public interest groups have been invited to participate. A draft document, "Forest Service Inform and Involve Handbook", will be used as a reference tool. (Contact: Tony Staed, FS, ext. 75576)